

when a proposal for increased safety to the public is made to them they dream of nothing, but increased economy to themselves, and at once dismiss the proposal, merely because they have already decided that it would scarcely do to take off a signal-man and put on a self-acting signal in his place. But this, let us tell them, is not the light in which the public view this question; neither is it that in which either inventors or ourselves view it, although a consideration for this very economy is assuredly also involved in it. To insure the utmost possible safety to the public—and why should not the public be conducted with the utmost possible safety?—the signal (of whatever sort) ought at least to be as numerous, if not as expensive, as those that are deemed essential to the utmost possible safety of distinguished individuals—such as emperors, kings, or princes—when they travel by rail. In such cases we know that even a continuous line of living signals in sight of each other is not considered superfluous. Now, although we would not wish to insist on so expensive and impracticable a system of signals for the safety of his Majesty the Public, what we do insist on is, at least, a cheap and reliable substitute for it. Should it still be objected that no self-acting signal could be entirely relied on, let us see what would be the consequence of such a signal acting where it ought not to act, or not acting where it ought; keeping always in mind that it is a substitute for the want of any signal at all, so far as the public is concerned. If it did not act when it ought, why then the public would be no worse than they are without any signal at all: if it acted when it ought not to have done so, all the harm would be a little temporary and unnecessary slackening of rapidity on the part of the train following. In nine cases out of ten, however, it would act properly; and if so, what a mighty benefit would such a beacon of danger be to the public, who are now often hurried blindly on to their destruction without the slightest warning or provision made beforehand for its prevention! The railway authorities must be compelled to view this question in a somewhat less self-interested light than that in which alone they seem to be capable of viewing it as yet.

We have long called for the establishment of a means of communication between the conductor, the passengers, and the engineer. On the American lines accidents rarely occur, mainly because of the facility of such communication. A recent writer in the *Times* says,—

"No train, throughout the length and breadth of the United States, starts on its journey till the rope, permanently fixed on the inside of the roof of each carriage and luggage car, furnished with a swivel at each end, is connected with the rope of the neighbouring carriage, till the engine is thus reached, where a large bell is attached, and either conductor or passenger is thus afforded the means of instantaneous communication with the engineer. The man who has it in charge to couple the carriages and this rope would as soon think of starting the train with the coupling irons unhooked as with these swivels disconnected."

That the public is to be trusted with the means of communication, though denied in England, is thus practically demonstrated in a country where cheap and commodious travel makes all classes travellers—where the educated and the uneducated, the timid and the brave, ride side by side.

The fares in England are much too high, and the result is, empty trains where there might be full ones. A train one third filled, is very little less expensive than a full train, and with reduction to the public would come increase to the shareholders. The rates on the Great Western are particularly high. It is true that this line affords the greatest perfection of travelling to which we have attained, but the experience of other countries, as well as of our own, proves the shortsightedness of extortionate charges. Still it is a well-managed line, and their express trains leave little to be desired, travelling their 120 miles (London to Bristol, say) in two hours and three quarters, or the one run of fifty-three miles from Paddington to Didcot in sixty minutes,—starting punctually, arriving punctually. Often their express dashes along at the rate of seventy miles an hour, and you are only made aware of the terrific pace at which you are moving by an occasional explode through a bridge, so to speak, or the flash past you of an express the other way. Standing on a platform, this passage of two trains is seen to be positively terrific; so much so, indeed, that it is not wise for an unsteady head to get too near the edge on such an occasion, lest the influence of the whirlwind should prove too strong for it. Seventy miles an hour may be called 105 feet per second, and this rate is little more than four times less than that of a cannon ball when discharged; a

— "Leadon messenger

That rides upon the violent speed of fire;"

and yet within, excepting on an occasional bad bit of road, you may write without inconvenience, so steady is the carriage. These very lines, indeed, we do write in an express thus flashing along. Trees, fields, villages, hills, come and are gone; the near objects first, those in the distance remaining longer in sight (like the earlier events of life in our memory); yet the paper may be held steadily and the pencil controlled. What is going on at the Swindon Station, by the way, to produce such an efflorescence of laurel leaves about the doorway? Some flowers, too. Oh! our gracious Queen is to take lunch here on her way (somewhat roundabout) to Balmoral. O! excellent, shrewd, and powerful Englishman! a foreigner might reasonably have said, is this all you can do to prepare a smiling reception for your Queen? Had you no taste and skill to show, as well as loyalty and good feeling? The smallest town in Belgium, or France, or Germany, or Italy, with the same expenditure, would have produced a work, a piece of art, something with a thought and a sentiment in it.

Well, well; one of these days, perhaps! At all events, it says, "We would give you something pretty to look at, if we only knew how."

By the way; why should a cup of tea be 6d. and a fivepenny newspaper be 6d. at a railroad station? The demand is great and certain, and there are no circumstances to justify the extortion. An ordinary newsman, who has to send the newspapers to his customers, gets his profit out of the five-pence: why should the railway news-vendors, whose customers come to them, and in shoals, charge more than the regular price?

We have already alluded to the effect likely to be produced by the electric telegraph, an effect far beyond what may appear at first sight probable. The whole civilised world will be in immediate communication before

long, and the East-India Company have already determined, on an immense step towards effecting it. They have arranged for the connection by means of the electric telegraph of the greater part of India, and have actually given orders, as we understand, which will require for their execution no less than 3,500 tons of galvanised iron wire! Truly an enormous work involving great results. We are beginning to move. What a Future "looms in the distance."

#### RESOURCES OF IRELAND.

THE spirit of progress is at length at work in this portion of the United Kingdom. Buildings of the first class are arising: harbours are being practised, railways completed, telegraphs laid down: the staple of the soil, proverbial for being of the richest quality, is subject to the tillage of new proprietors, and multitudes of the surplus starving population, fled from the sphere of wretchedness, have left their hovels and root-gardens to the enterprise of British farmers. Many of the unwrought sources of wealth in which the country abounds are now in active operation, such as mines of copper and coal, quarries of slate, marbles of great variety, porphyry and granite; and even the pest, hitherto deemed the poverty of the land, has become an ingredient of wealth and commerce.

Imitating the example of London, Cork and Dublin have resolved on great local exhibitions, which must introduce a taste and necessity for improved manufactures. There is, however, one great source of industry and wealth for which Ireland is peculiarly gifted that appears to have lain torpid, if not wholly neglected: the bays and harbours of the island are notoriously more numerous, more capacious, and safer than, perhaps, those of any other known country of the same extent. The encircling ocean is redundant with fish of descriptions and qualities not to be excelled, and yet no advantage has been taken of the abundance with which a bountiful Providence has so richly stored the waters.

Recent misunderstandings on the question of fisheries in the bay of Fundy and other maritime Transatlantic possessions of Great Britain, may well excuse an allusion to the long-neglected fishing stations on the west coast of Ireland. There exhaustless shoals of mackerel and herrings abound, and are hardly disturbed in seas that rarely show a fleet of hatch-boats. Cod-fish, turbot, and lobsters, the most valuable products for any market, are suffered to multiply, and are hardly molested. The peasantry of the coast are most impoverished, and yet, will it be believed? this very peasantry imports a great portion of its cured fish (which, amongst the poor, is chiefly herrings) from Scotland, and even from the Dutch!

It is often argued that the natural inertness, or want of industry, in the Irish, is the cause of this utter neglect of opportunities which nature has placed within their reach; but this cannot be so, since Irishmen, when transplanted to London, are the best labourers, and exhibit none of that repugnance to work which slanderers of the national character would ascribe to them: the evil rather lies in the want of education, of precept, and of example. If the peasantry of any parish or locality in England were deserted by the landlord class; ground down by excessive rents for small tenures; and thrown upon the guidance of a priesthood, possibly disaffected to Government, and dependant upon the very poorest for their support; if the lords and the squires, and the other several independent classes, had left them to the teachings of such priests, and to their own imaginings, what better could we expect to find them than the unbleeding lorn Celt?

In point of fact, the want of capital, the absence of commercial enterprise, and the utter want of encouragement, are the causes of the prostration which, up to a late period, had blighted the prospects and hopes of a people.